

SOME LITTLE KNOWN ANARCHISTS

By Mat Kavanagh

Sam Mainwaring

The Anarchist movement, numerically always a small movement in this country, has been rich, in fact unique, in exceptional personalities. One of the most outstanding was Sam Mainwaring. Big in body and mind, a Celt, with all the fire and enthusiasm of his race, he was yet a quiet persuasive speaker, and a tireless worker. The Cause was not a spare-time hobby with him, it was his life's work, and his zest never diminished. When he was too old and ill to do much open-air speaking, he took care that at his old favourite pitch, near Hoxton Church, there was a speaker, a platform, and literature on sale. An engineer by trade, he served for years as a delegate on the London Trades Council, and whilst never seeking an official position in his Union, he was active in it, seldom missing an opportunity of expressing his revolutionary views.

He was one of the original members of the Socialist League, a personal friend of William Morris, and was very closely associated with, and respected by, all the propagandists of that day whose names have passed into history. Wherever he happened to be living, Wales, London, or elsewhere, that place became the centre of propagandist activity. Older comrades will remember Sam's propagandist tours into Wales. The first one in company with F. Kitz. Sam spoke in his native Welsh, which he maintained was the finest speaking language in the world. On the second tour, many years after, he was accompanied by Terrida del Marmol. Together, they, later on, started the short-lived revolutionary weekly "The General Strike", which was the forerunner of similar ventures.

As a propagandist orator, Sam had his own style of address. It was characterized by clear deliberate thought, argument and enunciation, which held his audiences fixed until his message was delivered. He had a remarkable gift of humour, its form generally taking that of a story, the climax of which both amused and astonished the crowds who listened to him. It was a common thing for him to speak for four or five hours at a stretch, often during that time attracting two or three fresh crowds of people. His private personal efforts, like those of nearly all the active propagandist workers of that period were persistent. The movement to him never was merely a matter of public meetings only, but of private personal activity also.

An illustration of that fact is, that years ago Tom Mann, at a meeting at the Club and Institute Union Hall, in Clerkenwell Road, introduced Mainwaring as his "old foreman who, in the engineers' workshop, where they were both employed, brought the message of Socialism to him" It is lamentable that Tom should now be a public spokesman of a party who would, by the medium of the O. G. P. U., put a Russian Mainwaring up against wall and shoot him. Sam Mainwaring always advocated the right of others to express their own sincere convictions equally with himself.

This year being the centenary of William Morris, we ought to bear in mind some of the comrades who worked with him in the Socialist League. Some so-called historians of today regard Morris and the League as one and the same thing. The fact is, there was a body of really remarkable men and women in the League, and not the least of them was Sam Mainwaring. He left a gap which has not been filled.

His life and work is a challenge to the younger generations who follow. Will they equal or better his record?

Reprinted from "Freedom", May 1934

Ethel Mannin (1900-1985)

These two pieces were both written by Albert Meltzer. The first appeared in the Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review (1977), the second in 'The Anarchists in London 1935-1955', 1976

Ask who is the writer who has contributed most in the English

language to the spread of libertarian ideas and you will get some peculiar answers, probably one of them some obscure Canadian professor whom nobody reads except as prescribed



in the university curriculum. You might well get the same answer from Ethel Mannin, but for my money it is she who deserves the maximum credit, and seems to have received none that I know of. She was writing on sex and women's liberation fifty years ago and has introduced anarchist ideas in numerous works of fact and fiction.

Alas, she has committed the major literary sin: her novels have been successful, and the higher critics cannot possibly evaluate her.

Dig into the novels of Ethel Mannin and you will find anarchism, the Spanish Revolution, Emma Goldman, women's lib., the colonial struggle, the Arab guerrillas, all dealt with: her factual works include *Women and the Revolution* and many others.

At 75 she has announced she will write no more. The great quality in her novels was a zest for life. She owed a lot to her father, an old-time socialist who kept the faith. The drive for freedom, the resentment of injustice, and also the occasional

ideological muddle (one of her best books was *Christianity or Chaos?*, an oddly titled book for an agnostic talking about purely secular matters) were all very typical of her British working class background. She was in her way a skilled craftsman, her trade was with words. Now she has retired, her works, of consummate craftsmanship if not great art, are there to be admired.

Thank you, Ethel Mannin.

Ethel Mannin the novelist in fact did a great deal of work for the anarchist movement, in particular during the Spanish struggle, and continued to give us support during the war.

I would like to recall in connection with Ethel Mannin, once on a train journey discussing anarchism with a Communist shop steward and his young wife. He knew nothing of it beyond party line defamations (wasn't it Trotskyism?) - she, on the contrary, knew quite something of the subject, and was quite proud to think that she, for once, could carry on a political conversation while her husband was at a total loss. (She was not unaware how maddened he was). He asked her, amazed, "What do you know of Alexander Berkman?" when she asked if I had met him - she smiled and explained that she was not as dumb as he evidently thought she was. I realised - as much from the occasional mistakes she made as the from the general knowledge of anarchism she showed - that she was a reader of Ethel Mannin, who had come to her political books via her novels, and indeed, probably learned a lot from some of her better novels too. I naturally did not give this away to the husband, who was probably the better for the chastening experience. Before this I might have criticised Ethel Mannin's emotional approach to anarchism, but not since.

Ethel Mannin's works include *Red Rose, Comrade, O Comrade!*, *Bread and Roses*, various travel books including *South to Samarkand* and 7 volumes of autobiography. She used to write for the *Pelican* at the start of her writing career, and during the thirties contributed to *Spain and the World*.

K.S.L. -Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library

HELP!

we are looking for the following pamphlets, can any of our supporters help?

Anarchists Anonymous, 'London - the other underground' 1974

Anon, 'Anti Student' no date

Anon, 'Cops are hired to enforce laws' People's Press, San Francisco, no date.

Anon, 'Freedom, Present Situation' ORA early '70s

Phil Billingsley, 'The Japanese Anarchists' Smoothie publications, Brighton, 1974

Nadine Bloch, 'All things considered' Gina Rosenberg, Berkeley, 1977

Alfredo M Bonnano 'Spain and Revolution' Libertarian Spain Committee, no date.

R.G.Gregory 'Ring Your Own Bloody Bell' Wrekin Anarchists, no date

Kathy Lilith, 'Prostitute' Friends of Malatesta, Buffalo NY USA, no date

Keith Motherson, 'Cracks in the Shell, Fishguard, no date

Various, 'Collectives in Spain' Black Dog, London 1971

Various, 'Disruption' Libertaria, no date

...and the following books...

WC Hart Confessions of an Anarchist, London, E Grant Richards, 1906

Marie Gans: Rebels - into anarchy and out again, Kraus NY 1976 (a reprint from Dodd Mead & Co NY 1919)

Jack White, Misfit, An Autobiography London 1930

We welcome donations of any Anarchist books, pamphlets, papers, pictures, badges, posters. We can collect or pay postage. If we already have it we either a,) pass it on to other archives such as:

Anarchist Archives Project, USA

Thomas Serra, Italy

Anselmo Lorenzo, Spain

Cras, France

b,) sell it - at very cheap, affordable prices.

Finance

Our current account stands at £220. We spend up to £30 a week on mail. We have recently printed two pamphlets and are about to reprint our whole collection: money welcome!

Current Events

Our last pamphlet was 'Ethel MacDonald: Glasgow woman Anarchist' by Rhona Hodgart.

Our next pamphlet will be 'The CNT and the Russian revolution' by Ignacio Llorens. Future pamphlets will include

-Anarchism in Yugoslavia

-Aspects of the IWW in Australia

-The Anarchist secret service in Spain

-MIL (the Iberian Liberation Movement)

-Extracts from Garcia Oliver's autobiography

Two books we have co-produced with AK Press will be out shortly:

'**The Friends of Durutti**' by A Guillaumon

'**No Gods, No Masters**' - the seminal Anarchist anthology edited by Daniel Guerin.

Other projects with AK include Alexander Skirda's 'The Black Cossack', his masterly study of Makhno; also his work on Anarchist Organisation; Pavel Thaelmann's 'Fighters for Liberty' and lots more - look out for these titles!

Remember, we welcome pamphlets that will cover lost aspects of anarchist history. Send us your manuscripts.

Ever published Anarchist pamphlets?

Write and tell us what you did, how many editions you printed and how you distributed them. As well as having the pamphlets we want all the details of how they were produced. Keep our history alive!

On the Net

Details of our English Language pamphlet collection will be on the net by the time our next bulletin appears. Ride the wild surf of the Kate Sharpley Library!

Our webpage is up and running at:

[Http://members.aol.com/wellslake/sharpley.htm](http://members.aol.com/wellslake/sharpley.htm)

Use

Since January twenty people have visited the Library and we have dealt with 80 requests for help. Keep it coming.

all correspondence and feedback is welcomed. our address is:

Kate Sharpley Library

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The 'Groupe d'Etudes Scientifiques' The Scientific Spleen Squad

The Groupe d'Etudes Scientifiques were a tiny Sydney anarchist sect. They were the antipodean offshoot of the Groupe d'Etudes Scientifiques (GES for short) of Paris, run by the prodigious author Paraf-Javal. The Paris group published a bulletin from June 1910 onwards. The Sydney group, around from at least 1912, had it's own printing facilities, the communist-anarchist press, run by Ralph Carterer, and various addresses in Sydney.

Under the slogan of 'No Authority - Reason' they conducted vigorous propaganda for their beliefs. Partly, this consisted of forswearing poisons like tobacco, alcohol, and condiments; also to fight for logical, scientific thinking. All those indulging in 'a priori' reasoning, (which seems to have included most of the outside world) were judged to be 'abrutis'. This buzzword of theirs was liberally applied in their publications: Gustave Herve was an 'abruti and so-called anti-militarist'. The Sydney group published several tracts criticising socialist groups, but none attacking the social system as far as I can see.

In October 1914 the GES published an account of itself: 'The Groupe d'Etudes Scientifiques -Its Work And Method.' The author, Xarus Sphynx, mentions a plan for going to Japan. However, a hand-written note on the cover of the pamphlet states that he was deported from Queensland in 1917. I don't know where to.

The works of the group have the sound of works poorly translated, or more likely written in a strange second tongue, but with complete confidence in the strength of their scientific method. On mayday 1915 they could assert:

'What is Anarchism : Who are the Anarchists
Whilst organised slaughter called war is devastating the world; whilst nationalistic lunatics and militaristic maniacs are murdering each other; whilst degenerate abrutis of all sorts are suffering horribly and

dying miserably, consequent upon the world's ignorance and prejudice;

our GES is pursuing slowly, but with certainty its logical rational work of the vulgarisation of scientific knowledge and determinedly spreads the contagion of reason

more than ever we are able to repeat, in all serenity, and in face of the present events that the present is to us, the future is but to our 'anarchism' our work will stand, the rest will fall and be forgotten.

fraternally to our friends the world over, the GES of Australia the 1st of May

In October 1916, detective Moore, the Sydney police subversion expert had tracked down the mysterious Mr Sphynx, who turned out to 'identical with one Bjelke Boekgen, This man styles himself a professor of physical culture and a journalist, and the name Xarus Sphynx, he states is a "nom-de-plume".' The detective continues: 'Boekgen is an old Domain orator, and belongs to a small sect of cranks, who are said to be anarchists. He disclaims being such, and so far as I know of him, he appears to propound some wild theories, among which is that there should be no monetary currency, and that property should belong to all. I never knew of him being associated with or preaching violence. He does not appear to belong to the I.W.W., and has always held his public meetings in the Domain quite independently of them.'* (the IWW were the bogey of the moment to the police, actively opposed to the war and accused of arson, among other things. The idea of them, militant industrial unionists, associating with the GES is highly unlikely)

Exactly why Boekgen was deported is hard to say, it's possible he was caught in the anti- radical housecleaning that both Australian and American governments carried out at the time. It's doubtful the GES had enough impact to justify it. Their individualist attitudes make it unlikely they were up to much political engagement beyond criticism.

*NSW Police files concerning the IWW, box 7/5596

Makhno's Philosophers

-John Manifold

Back in *tachanka* days, when Red and Green
Pursued in turn each other and the White,
Out on the steppe, I'm told, there could be seen
A novel sight

Professors of philosophy, whom war
From some provincial faculty dismissed
To seek new pastures on the Black Sea shore,
Fell in with Makhno- anarchist,

Terrorist, bandit, call him what you will-
Who spared their lives and, either for a laugh
Or from some vague respect for mental skill,
Attached them to his staff.

Their duties were not hard. For months or years,
Lacking a porch in which to hold debate,
These peripatetics, ringed by Cossack spears,
Had leisure to discuss The State.

With flashing pince-nez, while the sabres flashed,
They sat berugged in carts in deep dispute,
Or in some plundered village hashed and thrashed
The nature of The Absolute

Bergsonians quite enjoyed it: from the first
They'd known Duration to depend on Space.
But Nietzscheans found their values arsey-versed
By Supermen of unfamiliar race.

And, whereas Platonists got mulligrubs,
Cynics were cheerful- though I'll not deny
They grumbled when obliged to share their tubs
With hogs from Epicurus' sty.



On quiet nights, bandits would form a ring
And listen with amazed guffaws
As syllogisms flew, and pillaging
Was reconciled with Universal Laws.

Symposia were held, whereat the host
(taught by the Hegelians of the Left)
In stolen vodka would pronounce a toast
To Proudhon's dictum: Property is Theft!

How did this idyll end? There's some confusion.
Makhno, I fear was caught-
Perhaps he let his native resolution
Get sicklied o'er with other people's thought.

But what of his philosophers? I feel
Certain they reached an Academe at last
Where each in his own manner might conceal
His briefly bandit past.

To fool the OGPU or the CIA
Would not be hard for any skilled expounder
Of Substance and Illusion, growing grey
But ever metaphysically sounder.

Yet each might feel at times old memories stir,
And know himself, as ever, set apart:
Once, among bandits a philosopher;
Now, among academics, Green at heart.

In fact - I've wondered- take Professor X-
Mightn't his arid manner be a blind?
Are those lack-lustre eyes, behind those specs,
Truly the mirror of his mind?

Or is the real man, far away
From Kantian imperatives, once more
Roaming the steppe, not as a waif and stray
But waging revolutionary war?

Although his tongue belabours
The stony boundaries of a bloodless creed,
His soul is back again among the sabres
Yelling, 'The Deed! The Deed!'

Manifold (a long time Australian CP member) has inaccuracies (like Makhno getting caught, for instance), I wonder where he learned this story? What is most interesting is not that, but the way, with a revolutionary situation to enthuse over, he is interested in comparative navel-gazing. Well, it saves him from asking what the red cavalry were up to!

Little Known Anarchists No2 - Alexander Metodiev Nakov

Bulgaria: A.M. Nakov, Anarchist Militant

The document printed below was lifted from the records of the Prefecture of Police (MVR) in Pernik, Bulgaria and it concerns an anarchist militant by the name of Alexander Metodiev Nakov. It was passed to us by the Bulgarian Libertarian Union (ULB) in exile whose accompanying note stresses that "this anarchist's dossier is a splendid biography supplied by the police themselves" and adds: "For this testimonial, Nakov is indebted and we are all grateful to the DS and its agents, the informants whose names are given inside inverted commas. It is more than just a simple biography of an anarchist fighting for freedom and justice: it amounts to a multi-biography of an entire people in its unflinching struggle."

We have decided to retain the essential style and pattern of the text, contenting ourselves with eliminating the biographical details of A. M. Nakov's two brothers and two sisters.

- Editorial Note. Published in French Anarchist magazine 1993

Confidential State Security Files Top Secret Document, Sole Copy Report on Alexander Metodiev Nakov

Alexander Metodiev Nakov was born on 1 August 1919 in the village of Kosatcha, Pernik department, a Bulgarian, resident in the town of Pernik at No 86, Machala 'Teva', in the 'Petko Napetov' district. Works in the 'Republic' mine as a locomotive fitter. Educated to 7th grade. Descended from a poor family. Married: two children.

His wife, Kirilka Alexeyeva Metodieva, born 28 September 1922, in the village of Viskar, Pernik department, lives at No 86, Machala 'Teva' and works at the 'Machinostroitel' plant in Pernik as a factory hand. As in the past, she is today non-party (apolitical): under her husband's influence, her position towards the popular authorities is unfriendly.

His daughter Jordanka Alexeyeva Nakov, born 8 September 1945, in Pernik, is a student, a member of the DUCJ.

His son, Marin Alexandrov Nakov, born March 1948, in Pernik, is a student, a member of the DUCJ.

His father, Metodi Nakov, is long since deceased.

His mother Jordanka Christova Nakova, was born on 2 July 1897, in Kosatcha village, Pernik department and resides in the same village as an apolitical housewife.

The subject in question has two brothers and two sisters (...)

Alexander Metodiev Nakov, following his primary schooling, worked for a time as a farmhand: after arriving in Pernik, he started work in the mines in Pernik. At present he works as a filler in the 'Republic' mine. *As a worker and producer, he is very good and carries out his production tasks conscientiously.*

As early as 1937, he entered the ranks of the anarchist movement and embarked upon militant activity: he helped launch an anarchist group among the workers of the erstwhile machine department of what is now the 'Machinostroitel' plant.

In 1941, the subject and five other anarchists were arrested by the police and sentenced to 6-8 years in close custody. He served 3 years in prison. After release from prison, he stayed in his native village, carrying on with his anarchist activity along with the subjects Miltcho Slavov, Asparoukh Grouzhov, Jordan Borisov, and Gueorgui Kirilov, all of them from Kosatcha village. At the end of 1944, he came to Pernik to work: and took up with Dimitri Vassiliev, Bojan Alexev, Laserman Asenov Minev, Maria Duganova, Kotze Zacharinov and others. They set up an "Elisee Reclus" anarchist organisation. The subject was Southwest Bulgarian Anarchist Union's organising officer for the town of Stanke Dimitrov. After the anarchist movement was outlawed, the subject carried on with his activity as a militant, taking part in an illegal anarchist conference, distributing mutual aid stamps and collecting funds for anarchists hit by reprisals. As a result of this activity he was sent in 1948 to the Belene labour and re-education camp, where he

Little Known Anarchists No2 - Alexander Metodiev Nakov

behaved very badly, being punished several times as a result. He was freed from the camp on 10 August 1953.

After his release from the camp, he carried on with his anarchist activity and frequenting anarchist circles. His closest connections are Dimitri Vassiliev Stojanov, with whom he shared lodgings for a time, Bojan Alexev Stefanov, Michail Stojanov Mindov, presently at No 2, "Batak" Street in Rousse, Vladimir Andonov and Ilya Gueorguiev Minev.

At present the subject meets frequently with the above-named anarchists: they discuss events, swap literature and assist one another.

In the labour and re-education camp, the subject met lots of anarchists from all parts of the country, with whom he remains in ongoing contact. In August 1961, using his warrant for free nationwide rail travel, he travelled to Varna, there to meet with Bojan Todorov Mangov, Atanase Mangov and Todor Baramov, very active anarchists: in Kolarovgrad he met with Trouftcho Nikolov Trouftchev: in Knegea, with Trifon Todorov Tersijski: in Debeletz, with Letcho Todorov Natchev: and in Sandanski, with Petko Ivanov Stojanov: he discussed their connections and morale with them all.

The subject's attitude towards the popular authorities is unfriendly: he makes scurrilous comments, damaging the prestige of the popular authorities.

Concerning the change in the currency, and in the presence of agent "Nikolov", he made a remark to the effect that in the wake of the change the price of goods would be increasing and the workers' wages shrinking.

Apropos of the 25 February 1962 elections, the subject made a statement that the elections are not free, but rather a consequence of the Communists' disarray. In the presence of agent "Bogdanov", he declared: "Scrutinise events through the prism of a free-thinker who cannot swallow the dogmas of the present communists and then you will understand and see where the world is headed. The communists have stripped peoples of all power and provoked their resistance throughout Eastern Europe,

especially in Poland, Hungary and East Germany. There the authorities only manage to hang on thanks to Russian pikes. The Hungarian events are a good example and confirmation of that."

In character, the subject is modest, a teetotaller, a non-smoker and a fine worker. He is possessed of a good overall political grounding, reads a lot, knows Esperanto and is a member of the "New Path" Esperantist society in Pernik. He is a fanatical anarchist who openly declares that nothing on earth can divorce him from his ideas and from his relations with anarchists.

The subject was taken to the OND No 1218 from 1954 to February 1962. Mobilisation papers.

Drafted by: P. Videnov

Approved.

Chief of Mobilisation Service

Assistant Colonel - illegible

Service Seal

Note

The above text is an exact copy (translated from the original Bulgarian) with all of its flaws, in terms of grammar and language: it was made and authenticated by the Bulgarian Libertarian Union in exile as a photocopy of the original, sole existing document registered by the MVR Prefecture in Pernik. Comment would be pointless. But there are a few necessary points that we ought to make clear:

1. As a document, its status is that of a HISTORICAL CERTIFICATE prepared by the regime of "People's Democracy" for its own use, which is to say by and for the Bulgarian CP as the vanguard of the working class, governing in the name of the class and targeting with its "dictatorship of the proletariat", not merely the "enemy", but the most typical representatives of the world of work.

2. The document shows how painstakingly the police prepare their files on enemies of the working class's very own regime, because the intelligence collected relates not only to the "enemy" himself but also to his wife, children, brothers and sisters, and not even

Little Known Anarchists No2 - Alexander Metodiev Nakov

his mother and his dead father are overlooked.

3. The "subject" who is not a human being but merely No 1218 on a police register is, in this instance, an anarchist, a member of the anarchist movement from the age of 18, having served jail time for his beliefs and his militant activities under the old regime and been interned under the current one for years even after the compilation of this file, in 1978, for collecting mutual aid stamps and having helped those of his comrades suffering under "reprisals", according to the document itself, and who are many, being a "great" many from "all around the country".

4. This anarchist's file is a magnificent biography (drawn up by the police themselves) of what can be achieved, one which should be a source of pride not only to the worldwide anarchist movement, but above all also to the working class, which has in him an outstanding representative.

5. This anarchist, an enemy of the regime, "product of a very poor village family and not of the bourgeoisie" is a worker, who "as a worker and producer, is very good and he carries out his production tasks conscientiously", "in character, he is very modest, being teetotal, a non-smoker and a good worker", not a "saboteur, layabout or hooligan, nor a mollycoddled fantasist". Nakov is grateful for this testimonial and we are all in the debt of the DS (Security Directorate) and its agents, the informers whose names are given in inverted commas. It is not merely a biography of an anarchist fighting for freedom and justice, but a genuine multi-biography of an entire people in its unflinching resistance.

- The Bulgarian Libertarian Union in exile

Note by the representative of the FACB (Bulgarian Anarcho-Communist Federation) in exile:

"At one time or another I have worked in concert with every one of the comrades named in this article, with the exception of Alexander Nakov's family."

Other News

A representative of the Library has been in Australia over the (southern) summer. The boxes of stuff are still arriving. We'd like to thank Jura and Barricade bookshops, the Gracia family (Sydney) for Spanish Anarchist materials, Ngarak books for works by Ethel Mannin, Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society (Melbourne) for a chance to access their library, and everyone else who gave us help and information. An honourable mention, too, to the "Ex Black Flag Editors Club".



Some nice snippets not big enough to print on their own are included here. Have you ever heard of the 'Groupe d'Etudes Scientifiques'? If not, here's your chance to get to know the most philosophical (and least useful) of all "Philosophical Anarchist" groups. On the subject of philosophy, we have included a poem about Makhno's Philosophers, from the Australian poet John Manifold. Of dubious historical value, you can at least say that it is one of the few anthologised Australian poems dealing with Anarchism, let alone it's insurgent Ukrainian form. This fits well with the attention that Makhno is at last receiving. The Kate Sharpley Library and AK Press will be publishing "The Black Cossack", Alexandre Skirda's biography of him soon.

People wishing to set up donations or exchanges of material should write to

Kate Sharpley Library
BM Hurricane,
London,
WC 1 N 3XX
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